HEREAFTER

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HEREAFTER

OR

THE FUTURE LIFE

ACCORDING TO SCIENCE AND FAITH.

BY

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Adapted from the French

BY

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INTRODUCTORY

"He who fights," says Huxley, "for moral truth in this world of anguish and sin is certainly stronger when he believes that sooner or later a vision of peace and happiness will take hold of his being. So also the one who works on the top of a mountain is more courageous when he sees awaiting him on the other side of the rocks and snows, his home and rest. *If this fate were founded on a solid basis*, certainly all mankind would cling to it just as obstinately as the sailor, when in danger of being drowned, clings to the buoy."

Notwithstanding these words of the overpraised agnostic, we hold that this future fate is founded on a solid basis and that we must admit its reality, unless we refuse to assent to all the crucial criterions which are the ordinary test of certitude and which are recognized by every philosopher.

There is a hereafter for the soul because, under every clime, all peoples have believed

and do believe this dogma. Some so-called free-thinkers vainly tried to prove the falsehood of this universal belief. Even Herbert Spencer, "the doctor of the unknowable," has been obliged to confess that: "Among the tribes who say that death is annihilation we yet commonly find such inconsequent beliefs as those of some Africans visited by Schweinfurth, who shunned certain caves from dread of the evil spirits of fugitives who had died in them."[1] Nowhere has total belief in annihilation been found and all the ac counts of historians, travelers and poets — these three great reflectors of the nations' ideas — corroborate this assertion. It is sufficient to refer to H. B Bancroft, in his "History of the native races of the Pacific States of America," Sir J. Barrow in his "Travels into the interior of Southern Africa," A. Bastian in his "Afrikanische Reisen," J. L. Burckhardt in his "Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys," H. Britton in his "Loloma," F. Boyle in his

[1] Principles of Sociology, XIV, 99.

"Adventures among the Dyaks," G. W. Earl in his "Eastern Seas," Sir G. Grew in his "Polynesian Mythology" etc., etc.

There is a hereafter for the soul, because our soul is simple and spiritual. Neither the simple nor the spiritual can be disaggregated since they are not an aggregate. As Leibnitz says, "it is as impossible for the soul to become divided as for the circle to become a square: this is against the essence of things." He therefore concludes that "the soul is naturally immortal." Such, too, is our conclusion. Of course, we admit that the soul which cannot be destroyed, may be annihilated by God, but further we shall see that His divine attribute of justice prevents Him doing this. And by the way, we can say with truth, that there is no example of any thing having been annihilated. [1]

There is a hereafter for the soul, because the human soul, unlike the animal's soul,

[1] Annihilation would be tantamount to the acknowledging of a failure in the creating of the subject at hand. Cfr. C. Mano, The Problem of Life.

is life independent of the body, it is life coming directly from God, life uniting all the particles of the body. Why should the soul perish when the body dies? The soul being the source and principle of life, its death would be unexplainable. I have a handful of sand in my hand: the sand flies away, my hand remains. So with the soul. When the body dies, the soul subsists.

There is a hereafter for the soul, because justice claims this privilege: too often wickedness is honored here below and virtue is despised: unless we admit that God is unjust, we must necessarily admit for the soul a life beyond the grave, when compensation shall be made.

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

To this supreme interrogation, which we read in the Apocalypse, an answer will be given.

The hour shall strike when justice shall begin, justice as unavoidable, sacred, necessary as God Himself.

God is Truth: truth radiantly has to be manifested, confounding all sophists and liars.

God is Love: love has to appear to crush the ungrateful.

God is Justice: retributive justice has to vanquish the impious.

To sum up with Emerson, let us say: "Our dissatisfaction with any other solution is the blazing evidence of immortality."

But as the philosopher of Concord says elsewhere: "We are much better believers in immortality than we can give grounds for. Its real evidence is too subtle or is higher than we can write down in propositions."

Strong as are our arguments, sufficient as they are to constitute *a solid basis*, our light is not adequate, that is to say, we are not adequately satisfied with its rays, as we are, when we *see* that two and two are four, or as when we prove, that the shortest way to go from a point to an other is by the straight line.

But what follows from this? That the proof is not sufficient, that the existence of the eternal hereafter of the soul cannot be proved philosophically, and conclusively, and surely? By no means. It follows only that we cannot prove it mathematically, geometrically, tangibly; and as here below we perceive adequately only what is proved to us in that way, it follows also, as says Emerson, that "we cannot write it down in propositions," but our mind is satisfied, although not fully.

It is the great error of the Positivists of the present day to confound the fields of thought, by mixing the spiritual and immaterial with the corporeal and the material. They claim for a series of truths a standard of demonstration of which they are not capable, and the fault of this method renders all positivistic search fruitless. These philosophers cannot require in the arguments which prove the immortality of the soul, however conclusive these arguments may be, the full evidence and the absolute clearness of the

axioms of mathematics, because the field of ideas is not the same — and this is so, because God wants from us the merit of faith. We are in the land of shadows, we are not in the land of vision. And as James Martineau says: "We do not believe in immortality because we have proved it, but we forever try to prove it because we believe it."

J. M. LELEU.

TROY, N. Y., May 3d, 1904.

Chapter I.

The Question.

Its Importance. — An Appeal to Reason and to Faith.

"Of all the things of which you are ignorant, what do you desire to know before all others?" — "Whether I am immortal or not."

Thus speaks mankind through the lips of a genius. (St. Augustine. Soliloquia, II.) For untold ages humanity was disinterested in the scientific questions upon which our century has thrown its light. But hardly is philosophical thought aroused, when mankind developes a passionate craving for the mysteries of the hereafter.

For man, indeed, there is not a problem more tragical than this: "to be or not to be," to return after an ephemeral existence to nothingness whence we sprang, or to

pass from death to immortality. This is why the present generation, fatigued by scepticism, looks anxiously towards the other side of life, and youth recovering its elasticity from the vanities which weakened it, gives serious study to the superterrestrial ideal.

Some philosophers in the name of experientialism proclaim that there is nothing after death. "Science," says Littré, "has not been able to establish any proof of life after death." For them the soul and the future life are chimeras, heavy words and nothing else; beyond the grave is the unknowable, the unnamed, nothingness.

Is this oracle of so-called experimental science infallible? Christian philosophy, in its turn, employing experience does not find it hard to demonstrate with the most simple facts and most positive data that, if experimentialism be impartially consulted, it testifies in favor of our immortality.

According to Brunetière, "reason cannot demonstrate the immortality of the soul or the existence of God." Guizot,

too, with the whole school of traditionalists pretends that "to try to establish the existence of a future life is to weaken the case: the hereafter is not an affair of demonstration, it is a matter of feeling."

We do not deny that purity of heart gives more limpidity and clearness, and that annihilation has always been, as somebody has said, the horizon of evil consciences. We must go to the true, with all our soul and according to Bossuet, reasoning which has a counter-stroke on the conduct of life "must end in the soul by a right will."

But neither science nor faith is a work of feeling or "religious poetry." As the basis of moral order there must be no blind belief but scientific evidence — the only kind capable of giving life and producing conviction. The writer hopes to prove that reason is not so weak but it can demonstrate the immortality of the soul, and he will offer proofs not in any party-spirit, or from any vain sophistry, but from the *perennis philosophia* of Leibnitz,

from principles of a triumphant and eternal evidence, the negation of which would destroy human thought.

If Berthelot is to be believed, "two sources of knowledge do not exist, one revealed arising from the abyss of the unknowable, the other extracted from observation and experimentation."

In other words human thought has no other field than the senses.

Happily the great chemist refutes himself, for he immediately recognizes that he is obliged to admit some realities, heat for instance, although he is totally ignorant of its intimate nature.

In spite of positivism it must, therefore, be acknowledged that beyond tangible facts there is a world of superior realities. Why then do you refuse the right to reason to put itself under the guidance of a safer leader whose titles it will examine in advance according to the methods of science, unless you admit that human thought which is hardly able to encompass an atom, is the measure of truth in its plenitude?

Faith is not the enemy of reason; it is its only authorized mistress and an auxiliary always useful and sometimes indispensable.

Philosophy lights *usque ad evidentiam* one side of the problem of human destiny; but its torch leaves the other side in the deepest darkness. We shall then call revelation to add its divine rays to the light of reason and to open to our eyes a larger horizon towards the side of the hereafter. In this way we shall see supernatural data admirably adjusting themselves to the needs and tendencies of human nature and we shall recognize from the wonderful harmonies radiating, here as elsewhere, from faith and reason, that both are the daughters of the same God.

Such is the aim of this little work: to throw upon the great question of the hereafter the light which emanates from the threefold focus of experience, reason and revelation; and if the conclusion does not impose itself with the inflexible rigor of mathematics, we hope it will give at least

an evidence capable of taking away all doubt and of becoming a counterpoise to the swoons of the will.

For if in the face of the proofs of our immortality the modern mind still retreats, it is not because it lacks the light, but because it fears the moral consequences whose truth menaces it. Now a man who thus avoids the truth, from fear of virtue, is amenable to the saying of Rousseau: "Put your soul in the state of always desiring a future life and you will never be in doubt about it."

Chapter II.

The Hereafter in History.

Before Christ. — After Christ. — Critical Discussion on the Testimony of Nations.

"Everywhere there exists a belief in a world different from that in which we live, everywhere faith is expressed in a future existence which awaits a part of our being after the destruction of the body." [1]

So speaks the unquestioned scientist M. de Quatrefages, after having read the annals of the nations.

The Egyptians taught that the soul is immortal: after separation from the body it appears before the supreme Judge, surrounded by forty-two assistants; the good are received into the society of Osiris and the wicked, to expiate their crimes, become incarnated in the body of animals.

The Phoenicians believed in justice

[1] Unité de l'éspèce humaine, ch. I.

beyond the grave, to be executed by the gods upon the *Alonims* or select souls.

The Magi who were among the Chaldeans the depositaries of wisdom, taught metempsychosis: at every period in the life of the world the soul begins a new existence freighted with the the responsibilities of its preceeding life.

The doctrine of the Persians is contained in the Zeud-Avesta and in the Boundehesh which is the explanation of the former book: the just departing from this life, are welcomed by Ormuzd the good God, while the guilty rejoin Ahriman the evil genius. But the triumph of sin will be only transitory: Ahriman will be vanquished and destroyed, and the wicked, after a temporary punishment, will share the happiness of the just.

The East-Indian Nirvana is well known: according to Brahmanism, the soul, after divers re-incarnations proportionate to the merit of the individual, plunges into absolute Being and loses its personality in an eternal sleep.

Such, too, is almost the doctrine of the King, the oldest books of Chinese literature.

Purer and higher was the belief of the Gauls and the primitive Saxons; the druids expressly taught the dogma of the future life and the principal condition of meriting happiness was to practise the virtue dear to their forefathers, fortitude.

The Greeks and Romans share the universal faith. Plato in his *Laws* and *Phedo* insists upon the doctrine of future regeneration and admits the eternity of hell: "Those who die guilty of great crimes fall into Tartarus and never depart thence." [1] Unhappily the arguments he uses are defective and his doctrine is spoiled by errors such as the pre-existence of the soul.

Aristotle is not clear on the subject. Still he considers the soul as a "divine and eternal principle" which comes not from matter but from something extraneous to itself. It is therefore spiritual. Aristotle

[1] Phedo, 113, 114. — Gorgias, 526—528.

places the premises from which the existence of a future life is inferred. [1]

According to some rationalists the Hebrews were the only people who disagreed with the universal belief in the future life: this idea at first alien to the Mosaic religion was later borrowed by the chosen people from the savants of Babylon and Alexandria. Quite recently Professor Friedrich Delitzsch of "Babel and Bible" fame expressed this opinion before the Kaiser and his court.

It is true that the doctrine of the future life is not formulated as clearly in the Old Testament as in the New. According to Bossuet the reason is to be found in the fact that popular worship of the dead would have given place to superstitious evocations of spirits and idolatry, when one of the important missions of the Hebrews was to keep intact the dogma of the unity of God, against the gross tendencies and the polytheism of the day. Besides the existence of a future life, of punish-

[1] The Soul — Metaphysics.

ment and rewards eternal is literally expressed in many passages of the Old Testament, for instance in the Book of Job.

Christian revelation put this dogma in its full light. The immortality of the soul, the final separation of the good and the bad, the brevity of the present life, the magnificence of heaven, the torments of hell: all these truths are recalled on every page of this divine book so fitly called the "Gospel of Immortality."

Among the Fathers of the Church and Catholic writers of any renown Origen in his book of Principles is the only one who, while admitting the future life, argues against the eternity of punishment, but several Councils settled forever the formulary of the dogma, especially the second of Constantinople, the fourth of Lateran, the second of Lyons and the Council of Florence.

So up to the eighteenth century the Catholic doctrine was generally taught in all its purity. This unanimity was scarcely broken in the ninth century by the

doctrine of metempsychosis held by John Scotus Erigena[1] or in the twelfth by the pantheism of Averroes, or in the sixteenth by the atheism produced by the Renaissance.

But reason separated from faith without being chained in its lawful ascent avoids dangers with difficulty and often goes from one excess to another, from the most degrading sensualism to a proud pantheism.

We know the leaders of the sensualistic school who according to the word of Aristotle make the body and the brute rule instead of man: once the spirituality of the soul is denied there can be no more question of immortality. To this group are connected the greatest number of modern materialists: so for Büchner the final destiny of man consists in preparing phosphates for nature and for the De Goncourt brothers, life according to Paul Bourget "is nothing else than a series of epileptic fits between a double nihility."

[1] Born in Ireland, died about 875, condemned by Rome in 1059, author of Dialogus de divisione naturae.

The pantheistic school admits a certain immortality, but it is the immortality of the general reason and not of the individual soul. Kant is its precursor; for him the soul is only the idea of unity of thought under the diversity of phenomena; speculative reason therefore cannot demonstrate either the existence of the immortality of the soul called by him the noumenon; still as this truth is necessary for the direction of life, it must be admitted in the name of practical reason.

For Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, only one thing is immortal, namely, the idea and that, not in passing individuals, but in the species or ideal form which is common to and survives all.

Renan, Comte and Taine likewise conceive eternal life as an ideal life to which we rise with our thought and which will consist in the remembrance remaining in us after the disappearance of our personality.

Let us still mention metempsychosis which deceived so many during the last

century with its different epurations of souls in an immortality earthly according to some, sidereal according to others.

A still further manifestation of the thought of mankind regarding its destiny is found in the worship of the dead and in the grand or humble monuments everywhere and at all times erected in honor of the departed. Of course in customs as in doctrines there are absurdities and extravagances but there is also a foundation of truth which is everywhere found to be the same. Aside from some exceptions the peculiar secret of which lies in the passions, humanity expects a life beyond the grave.

Whence came the general belief? Among men there is an infinite variety of characters, aptitudes, customs and prejudices. How then explain this universal faith in the hereafter?

It is not a product of sensible experience, for every life seems to be destroyed in the terrible duel between life and death.

It is not the result of science and study, for it precedes all philosophical reflexion.

It is not the work of a government or any temporal power, for those whom the ancients led to the punishment of a future life were kings like Sisiphe, Tantalus, Ixion.

It is not an invention of this or that religious sect, for all religions are penetrated by the thought of a hereafter.

It cannot be attributed to human passions, since it is their torment, nor to ignorance, since it exists among the most civilized people.

To this fact, therefore, there are only two causes.

First it is certain that among all people religion gave birth to philosophy. Man was first a worshipper, then a philosopher, and the primary source of the beliefs he has professed was an initial revelation evidently infallible or God Himself.

If we refuse to admit this fact, notwithstanding the testimony of history, we are obliged to see at least in this declaration of universal faith the spontaneous craving and irresistible instinct of human nature:

"*Omni in re*," says Cicero, "*Consensio omnium gentium lex naturae putanda est.*" For, among so many distinct traits one thing is common to all men — their nature with the essential laws which direct them. Now none of these natural laws exists in vain; all answer a need and are conformed to the reality: *natura non mentitur*. When, for instance, the instinct of birds leads them to remote climates or gives them a mysterious foresight into the morrow, there is reason for that instinct and it never deceives them.

So it is with the laws which binds mankind and forces it invincibly to hope for an immortal morrow after death.

Since the human race attests this, there is a hereafter.

At such and such an hour in its history mankind made the idea of the future life conform to its errors and passions, but at the bottom of the question affirmation is unanimous and constant; from all the days of time and all the points of space there arises a profession of faith in immortality.

Chapter III.

Hereafter and the Human Soul.

Simplicity of the Soul. — Its Spirituality. — Its Immortality. — Activity of the Soul separated from the Body.

The positivism of to-day asserts that "man can know nothing of the nature of his soul."

To demonstrate movement the old philosophers went walking; let us try to pull aside the curtain which hides from our eyes the nature and destiny of our soul.

I shall begin by saying that the human soul is not a body, nor is it divisible and composed like a body; it is simple and without parts and therefore absolutely distinct from matter.

Two proofs among thousands establish the truth. Consciousness unmistakably affirms the identity of the ἐγώ in the different periods of life. It is *I* who was young

and have become old, who long ago did acts, the responsibility of which I still carry. Remembrance, the ordinary witness of this identity, proclaims the unalterable persistency of the deep and substantial realty which says *I* at any time of my life. The body, moreover, is continually renewed. It is not necessary to demonstrate here the famous experience of Flourens establishing that all parts of the body, even the bones, transform themselves perpetually. According to the materialist Moleschott, "only thirty days," and not seven years as was commonly held, "are necessary to give the body a new composition."

The conclusion is evident, the ἐγώ is unchangeable, while the body changes; there is, therefore, in us a force distinct from matter "which lives in it and directs it," and which after having erected the majestic architecture of the body according to "the directive idea." constantly renews all corporal parts.

Again, there is nothing common between

the acts of the soul and the qualities of space. Can you measure a half of an emotion, a third of a thought, a fourth of an idea? Materialists tell us that the thought is an agitation of molecules: but did you ever see rectilinear notions, circular sentiments, round or square psychological phenomena?

No, the soul is not "the ensemble of the functions of the brain and the spinal marrow."

The last word on this subject has been said by Gauthier: "that is a fossilized science which is bold enough to tell us that only matter exists and that only its laws govern the world." [1]

It follows from this that the soul, being indivisible, cannot perish by decomposition: as it is without parts it cannot be broken or corrupted. This is the reason why St. Thomas concludes in his sober, energetic language: "The first and essential property of the soul is to be, and this being can be lost only by the separation

[1] Revue générale des sciences, N. du 15 Avril 1897.

of the soul from itself — a thing that is impossible." [1]

But is this enough to assure us of the immortality of the soul? No, the soul of animals is as simple as the human soul, and nobody dares seriously attribute to it a life beyond the body.

In truth every principle of activity is simple and immaterial, yet we see all energy modifying itself and then disappearing.

Here is where the Cartesian principles seem to us to be radically defective, and this weakness appears to be recognized by some of its exponents. One of them asked recently: "Is it true that death is only a dissolution of the parts?"

Descartes and many of his followers have confounded two things which are very distinct: simplicity and spirituality.

Simplicity is only the negation of parts, it is indivision, indivisibility; spirituality is something higher. According to St. Thomas it is "the power to exist independently and even outside of matter."

[1] Summa Theologica. I. p., q. a, 16.

As long as you do not prove that the human soul rejoices in the possession of this second sublime property, you give only an initial and insufficient proof of its immortality.

If, indeed, the soul cannot be destroyed by decomposition, is it not to be feared that it follows the fate of the body to which it is joined *and that it disappears with it?*

In our demonstration we shall follow the experimental method, taking for granted certain exact facts which cannot be denied. We do not see the soul in itself, but it betrays and reveals itself through its works.

Now what is the most common subject of our thoughts and desires? The true, the good, the beautiful, the just, the absolute, right, duty, law, virtue, ethics. Even in material things it is the universal, the abstract, the necessary that we perceive, for instance, the notions of being, end, substance, causality, etc.

Are these things of three dimensions? Have they weight and volume, a half or

third of which may be taken off? What sense, sight or feeling apprehends this immaterial world? Is it not evident that these noble realities, absolutely devoid of all sensible qualities, as sound and color, are entirely inaccessible to a corporal organ? The act, therefore, by which we perceive and desire them is free of matter and goes beyond it: it is transcendental and spiritual.

But the ancients used to say *operari sequitur esse;* the manner of acting is in keeping with the manner of being, the act is the faithful reflection of the principle from which it comes: this is an application of the principle of causality and materialists themselves do not deny it. "The positive theory," says Büchner, "is forced to acknowledge that the effect must correspond to the cause." [1]

It results from this, then, that the human soul, passing beyond the sensible order, enjoys a peculiar life which it holds from its own nature.

[1] Kraft und Stoff, p. 218.

The soul does not receive its life from matter, its being does not arise from its union with the body; why then should it perish with it? "A being," says Fénélon, "which is not the cause of the existence of another, cannot be the cause of its annihilation." [2]

Thus there appears the difference between the soul of man and that of the animal: this acting through and with the senses only, does not survive the destruction of the body. "How," asked Aristotle, "could the power of walking exist without the legs?" [3]

The human soul, on the contrary, according to the grand image of Dante, is not drowned in matter; it emerges from its top, as the swimmer from the water. It becomes, writes St. Thomas, more capable of apprehending the highest truth as it becomes independent of corporeal things. Even in a state of union with the body,

[2] Lettres sur la Métaphysique et la Religion, Lettre II, ch. 2.

[3] De Generatione, L. II, ch. 3.

the soul sometimes seems to retire into itself to enjoy truth in a better way. When the senses become dull or weak, the intellect of the scientist or the ascetic soars into ecstasies and great souls radiate extraordinary brilliancy through the ruins of the body.

Beside nowadays the materialistic thesis is abandoned by the majority of physiologists and physicians who formerly were its principal supporters. They have thoroughly explored the surface of the brain and found only sensitive and motor centers; there is no chamber there to locate the intellect. If, therefore, the soul cannot think without images, it is because the brain is the indispensable *condition* of thought: it is not the *cause*.

What conclusion springs from these facts? Either that observation and experience are powerless and sterile, and then, what becomes of the pretentious positive and scientific method? Or, they have the importance which is attributed to them, and then we must acknowledge in

man a principle independent of matter, a transcendental and spiritual reality.

When a naturalist has before him some organs of an animal or plant, by the process of deduction he arrives at a certain knowledge of its functions and life and constitutes again the whole organism.

Now look at the operations of the soul: they attest its simplicity and spirituality. But the nature of the soul betrays even its destiny. What the soul is shows us what it will be; independent of the transformations of matter, it holds its titles to immortality, engraved in its immutable and spiritual essence: its reason for being is not in its union with the body, though that union constitutes a natural entity: it is higher.

The soul is immortal, not by favor or privilege, but because, as Bossuet says, it has in itself the principles of an unchangeable consistency.

If, then, science with scales in hand proves the perpetuity of the smallest atom of matter, philosophy with the help of ex-

perience and reason, demonstrates the supremacy of the soul over matter and its future destiny.

Is there need to add that the survival of the soul will in no way be akin to idleness or inertia?

To be, even in the lowest degree, is to act: every substance is endowed with activity in keeping with its condition: *non est substantia otiosa.*

The interruption of the soul's life would be tantamount to its annihilation. The senses undoubtedly will be reduced to impuissance: how indeed could the soul see without eyes? But the intellectual faculties whose acts are thinking, willing, loving, will freely exercise their activity, since they are spiritual; the conditions of this activity will scarcely be modified from the outside.

The higher realities, as the true, the beautiful, the good, which belong to the supersensible world, will always be within reach of the soul and will nourish and realize its aspirations. If it is removed

from the influences of the sensible world whence it borrowed its ideas, why should they not come to it by another way, for instance by the action of a superior, a divine light, as we shall later explain?

The soul will always be able to know itself, to possess its acquired ideas or to add to them, and even have intercourse with other spirits and especially with God. With Bossuet let us conclude: "After death the life of our reason is safe."

Chapter IV.

Hereafter and Justice.

What is Justice? — Insufficient Sanctions. — Necessity of a Future Life. — The Neo-Stoicism of Kant. — False Conceptions of Justice.

Justice is a universal and absolute principle: it is not subordinate either to circumstances or to local or historical contingencies; it is as unchangeable as a geometrical axiom. As it is true everywhere and always that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, so is it true that good and evil are separate and distinct in all climates and at all times.

Besides, if there exists a God personal, intelligent and free, justice, as all perfections, is interwoven in His indefectible essence. He is, indeed, supremely independent in Himself, but He must render to every man according to his works. Creator and Father of human beings en-

dowed with liberty, He is the author of the laws which direct their conscience; indispensable supporter of the moral order, He must insure to it a sanction capable of preventing and repressing human lapses. In short, He must be at the same time the eye which directs and the hand which strikes.

Now, if justice is not an empty word, it must receive somewhere a plenary and infallible application.

In this world justice is already exercised: legal chastisements, the natural consequences of virtue and vice, the testimony of men, the satisfaction of conscience are sanctions not without value. But are they sufficient? No.

In the first place human justice is a real image of God's justice, but one often disfigured.

Who does not know that justice in this life is often the application only of defective laws shaped by human ignorance and perversity.

Besides, it reaches only a very small part

of our activity; our interior life wholly escapes it, and among exterior acts many do not fall under its regard or power. It is, moreover, as an old writer says, only a "one-handed justice;" it simply punishes, while its rewards of virtue are as rare as they are delusive.

And what shall we say if the sword of justice comes into weak, corrupt hands, and if it spares great criminals and strikes the innocent!

But, perhaps, exterior sanctions such as wealth, honor, fame offer a surer homage to virtue. This is not so: for if public esteem generally favors a man of conscience, material prosperity is very often the salary of vice triumphant.

The judgments of the *vox populi* are usually blind, passionate, capricious, while its leaders are flatterers employing only "words, words, words."

As to glory, it may seduce some idols of popular election, but for the multitude it is a word absolutely empty, and if you make glory consist in a posthumous noise which

does not reach those whom it would exalt, then we must confess that it is a very aleatory counterpoise to the hard sacrifices imposed by virtue.

When, then, Renan proposes as a reward for virtue "the living in a collective thought of mankind and in the general result of the working-up of the species; when Littré asserts that "the contemplation of the eternal laws of the world" makes life worth the living, they speak less as moralists than as the virtuosos of dilettantism.

Others may say: "It is true that mankind does not receive any reward for virtue, but *cui bono?* Right-living carries its own reward: virtue and happiness can be put in equation since they are one and the same thing."

Nonsense! What is this interior peace of conscience, this happiness resulting from virtue? It is less a reward than the impartial voice of a witness and judge; at most, it is an anticipatory consolation which helps us wait the hour of justice, but it becomes a fallacy and lie, if that hour never strikes.

Besides, how many pure and delicate souls see that precious peace disappear little by little in proportion to the growth of the ideal with which they are smitten, and to the realization of the inevitable imperfections which separate them from it!

And is remorse the infallible punishment of vice? Does it bear a true proportion to the sacred exigencies of justice? It, indeed, punishes light crimes and the guilty who are not yet familiarized with evil, but its spur becomes blunt by the habit of sin and ere long the "interior tormentor" lulls the insensible and atrophied conscience into a fatal yet real peace.

Is it necessary to give here any serious consideration to the evolutionary morality advocated by Huxley and Spencer which seeks to popularize virtue by basing it on the complete perfectibility of human personality? It is to be feared that this result, excellent in itself, will seem to the majority of men to be incommensurable with the efforts that it supposes. Such an ascent of the soul presumes an orientation,

an aim, a terminus. Towards what unknown thing will this orientation occur if only nothingness awaits us the last evening of life? And in the supposition that one or the other of these sanctions or the aggregate possesses the value which is attributed to them, is not supreme injustice still to be repaired?

Is it not, indeed, the heroism of greatness and the glorious summit of virtue to give one's live for a great cause, for one's country or faith? On the other hand, is it not the most abominable crime to withdraw stoically from life by suicide and thus betray the most essential duties towards God, society and one's self?

But what is there among the sanctions so far considered that can efficaciously inspire the martyr and successfully restrain the apostate of duties?

There is nothing. Another justice must then exist, or justice is but an empty word and a snare.

Ah! I understand the sorrowful appeal, not to impassible nature but to divine

justice, which everywhere is made, by barbarous tribes as well as by civilized nations, by the lips of Plato and Seneca, as well as by the voice of St. Paul, and which constitutes the most popular demonstration of the immortality of the soul.

"To merit," wrote Seneca, "is to wait." "Merit and suffering," says Caro, "are the things which make us immortal; that is the eternal, indestructable argument of the future life." Struck by this fact Fénélon asserted that even if the soul were material, it would be necessary to bestow immortality upon it, in order to render to every man according to his works.

The existence of this supreme sanction has often been called into question, despite its evident necessity. A member of the school of ethical culture lately declared that "the fear of punishment and the hope of a reward are motives which alter the morality of an act."

Let us admit it: to believe that the human heart is solely accessible to motives of interest is evident calumny, but to deny

the influence of fear and hope, would also be to oppose the reality of facts.

To demand this pretended disinterestedness would be to exact a task against nature.

This theory moreover supposes that man is absolutely autonomous, that he is in himself the reason of being, his center, his god. This is the autolatry conceived by those writers who imagined "the religion of the soul"—of a soul whose immortality they call in question.

Is it not evident that man like other beings, is subject to superior laws? He is free but not absolutely independent. His first duty toward the supreme Legislator is to respect His laws, especially that one which by an irresistible movement brings the subject to happiness. And if this primal duty identifies itself in man with interest, it is because the same God is at the same time the supreme arbiter of our destiny and the sovereign good which will be its crown.

To despise these rewards and pains is to

deny with surprising pride that essential prerogative of the absolute Being by which He is the principle and the end of everything; the guardian of moral order, the avenger of crime and the rewarder of virtue.

False and boastful theory, indeed, which has not even the merit of originality! For it is stoicism again revived and the visible disguise of an error famous two centuries ago, quietism.

If justice which rewards, shocks the disinterestedness of some free-thinkers, or so-called seekers of truth, justice which punishes, alarms their conscience and disturbs their soul with scruples.

"Vengeance," they say, "does not cure evil: it multiplies it." This is true regarding private vengeance; arbitrary, capricious and passionate "it multiplies evil" and becomes the source of deplorable excess. God, therefore, forbids it and reserves the exercise of it to Himself, either through the agency of human justice or through direct and personal intervention: "*Mihi*

vindicta, revenge is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord'' (Rom. XII, 19).

It does not follow that God can be compared to a fierce, vindictive tyrant gloating with gross satisfaction over the sight of the sufferings of the guilty who fall into His hands.

He is the supreme and incorruptible Judge who executes the eternal laws of justice; these laws require the re-establishment of the general equilibrium disturbed by sin. This re-establishment of the moral order is accomplished by the pains which are as a benevolent reaction against evil.

From this clear and simple conception of justice one sees how false and dangerous is the pseudo-humanitarian theory, according to which, justice ought to limit itself to the right of correction only.

By this rule the most inveterate criminals escape the arm of justice and the more incorrigible they are, the more powerless and disarmed society becomes; if these diseased member of the social body reject its offices, justice has only to depart, as a physician politely discharged.

No, the amelioration of the guilty is not the principal end of justice; that end is the final triumph of good over evil: insufficiently assured in this life, it will be evident to everyone in the next life. And so, beyond the obscure and narrow horizon of the imperfect justice of this world, both reason and faith see the dawn of a luminous, open future where everything discordant here below will mingle in the final harmony of the whole of creation.

The world where we live is only a prelude and beginning: it is elsewhere that we shall attain our end. As Rousseau says: "All things do not terminate with life, — they are regulated after death."

Chapter V.

Hereafter and the Divine Plan.

General View. — Law of Providence. — Aspirations of the Soul. — Metempsychosis. — Pantheism and Immortality.

All philosophy is ruled by the idea of end. Finality is the dominant law of the world; for according to the profound remark of Aristotle nothing is made in vain, and a thing without an end is impossible, for it would be without reason. Bossuet writes: "The relation between order and reason is extreme." God the sovereign and perfect reason, rules the world with an impeccable wisdom. As a clever artist, He adapts the means to the end and organizes every being in view of its determination. There is a perfect proportion, I was going to say, a perfect equation, between actions and their principle, between functions and their end, between the nature and destiny of all

beings. So true is this that if one term is known, reason can with assurance discover the other. Such is the order of the κόσμος, the vague harmony of which Pythagoras admired and which St. Thomas Aquinas put in such bold relief.

In fact, just as the knowledge of the properties of bodies discloses to the scientist their nature and destiny, so the study of the faculties and aspirations of man must inform us of his future. Is it pos sible that God has formed from the same mould a being called to immortality and another condemned to spend an ephemeral existence without hope of survival in the future?

* * *

By a privilege of its nature the soul survives the body. These are two substances so unlike, that we ought to be more surprised at their union than about their different destinies.

God, says St. Thomas, respects the natural condition of every being. If man is noble when he takes this oath: "What

is said, is said, what is written, is written," how can we understand that God tells a lie and treacherously breaks the word He gives?

But what are created beings and especially the human soul? They are divine ideas externalized, they are imperfect but real expressions of the Word of God, or, as Bacon says, *vox Dei in rebus revelata.*

If God, therefore, has given to the soul a spiritual nature and an immortal constitution, He will not abrogate this providential disposition. He is obliged not to contradict Himself and the soul will subsist, as St. Thomas says, "by the immutability of the divine will."

And even if the soul by nature were not immortal, one could not conclude that it ought some day to terminate its existence. For God created things to be, *ut sint;* God, the Being by excellence and the principle of all things, does not destroy anything that He has made. His gifts, says Holy Writ, are without repentance and He is not the God of the dead but of the living.

This prolific and luminous principle of St. Thomas is an intimation of genius; Lavoisier demonstrated it experimentally and formulated it thus: in the domain of nature "nothing creates itself, nothing is lost, everything becomes transformed." [1]

Every part of nature undergoes an indefinite metamorphosis, nothing disappears. When the human body, for instance, ceases

[1] This principle of Lavoisier is just now receiving a new proof from the revelations of the metal, radium; and the atomic theory and principle of the conservation of energy can now be looked upon as certain. Sir William Ramsay, professor of chemistry at University College, London, has made the discovery that this mysterious element, radium, has the power of changing into another element, helium. He found that besides its other manifestations, radium constantly gives off an emanation which seems to behave in all respects like a heavy gas. It can be collected in flasks, measured, weighed, but in about a month it entirely disappears. What becomes of it? By the aid of the spectroscope Ramsay found that it changes into helium. Thus it can be claimed one element has been detected in the very process of transformation into another.

to live, it does not become annihilated, as is commonly believed; under the action of chemical forces, it undergoes the law of exchange: but not one atom is lost.[1]

Thus does God, the author of this law of the physical world, respect beings infinitely small, and thus does He preserve their existence. They have, however, no end proper to themselves and they exist only for the whole, of which they are a part. Will God then plunge into nothingness the human soul which Kant calls "an end in itself," and which possesses more reality than all the material world? Without doubt the soul does not necessarily exist; God freely created it and He can freely destroy it; as it has not in itself the reason of being, God would have only to suspend His conservative action which is a prolonged creation, that it may cease to be. Such annihilation, however, would require nothing but an intervention of His almighty power: to annihilate and to create, to make from nothing and to reduce to nothing are

[1] Cremation does not militate against this theory: the process, though quicker, is the same.

two equivalent acts pertaining to the only power capable of passing over the immeasurable distance which separates being from non-being.

And nothing in fact, says science, is annihilated in nature: all its elements persist and transform themselves; all the cosmic forces pulverize matter without destroying it: how, then, can they annihilate the soul?

Can I do that myself? No, indeed; I have not given being to the soul and I cannot take it away. Only God preserves it and He alone can annihilate it. As, then, a number must be odd or even, so, the angelic doctor concludes, it is becoming that the soul is immortal.

Let us now in the light of divine wisdom examine no longer the immaterial essence of the soul, but its moral nature and intimate aspirations.

Every created life, not having in itself the source of its being, has need of being supported by the absorption of an extraneous element. But the law of assimilation which

presides over nutrition, evidently demands that the food be in keeping with the needs of and accommodate itself to the nature of the life it must renew. There must be and there is, it is easy to see, a kind of homogeneousness between the living substance and the nutritious principle which nourishes it.

Now truth is the food of the soul, the life of the intellect. It is the *pabulum* not only of the science of the physical world and material things, but also of principles necessary, unchangeable and eternal. And, although our mind is most limited, nothing, strange to say, can appease its need of knowing; it is thirsty for absolute truth. It travels through the kingdom of created things without obtaining the satisfaction of its natural craving; even after having explored the immense ocean of truth which the dying Newton contemplated, its curiosity does not yet attain a sufficiency, because it carries with it an ideal whose term reaches the infinite.

Desire is proportionate to knowledge

and goes the same way. Let us listen within: our heart tries everything in vain and its most imperious desires are unsatisfied. After our thought has made a grand tour through finite things, our *heart* feels a sensation of emptiness which nothing here can fill: science, wealth, honors, beauty, satisfactions of every kind fall into it as into a bottomless abyss which grows deeper and deeper. But there is something more: an animal confined in the narrow sphere of sensation has no desire which passes the corner of the space it occupies, and the moment of duration which measures its life. Man, on the contrary, leaps over time and space by thought, and naturally desires to be always. There is in us an irresistible aspiration after immortality, a passionate instinct of survival, an illimitable ambition to live forever.

So, all our aspirations mount toward the infinite. As bodies tend toward the center of the earth, the soul gravitates toward the absolute and therein searches the place of its eternal rest. Thence it came and there

it will return. For the perfection of all things, says St. Thomas, is to go back to their principle: it is the flux and reflux of creation.

A strange reason some, perhaps, will say; you believe in a future life solely because you desire it. — Yes, but there is a great difference between an individual and private desire, and a natural and spontaneous inclination of the human heart. This desire is not our own work, nor is it the fictitious product of our imagination; we did not give it to ourselves and it is not in our power to remove it from us; it springs from the very bottom of our being and is identified with it.

Nor is this desire a personal fact resulting from fortuitous circumstances, but a primitive, human, universal fact which can be explained only by a general law of nature. And this law, having God as its author, cannot lead us into error.

What! God does not deceive the instinct of an insect, and would He make that instinct lie which He has engraved on our

soul with His own Hand! He has not established any of the laws of nature in vain, and would He violate the law which He has placed on man as on His masterpiece! He makes everything "with number, weight and measure;" with infallible wisdom He leads beings to their end; today He impells us by an irresistible movement towards happiness, truth, life, the ideal, and would He wait for us on the morrow to plunge us into nothingness, after having given to us a foretaste of those things which escape us! No, no, it is not true unless we admit with Hegel that contradiction is the law of being as well as of thought. But "that which is capable of God," says Bossuet, "must be immortal with Him."

* * *

After the materialism of the eighteenth century, some thinkers, fatigued by doubt and denial, sought peace and strength in a vague and ambiguous spiritualism. They allowed themselves to be seduced by an old error which had originated in Egypt and

Chaldea and which Pythagoras and Origen in their time made notorious. I refer to metempsychosis whose adepts during the last century include Fourier, the founder of the phalansterian school, Jean Reynaud, the author of "Heaven and Earth," Pezzani, the author of "The Plurality of the Existences of the Soul," and, some have recently added, the dreamers of spiritism.

According to them, when life reaches its end and the organs are exhausted, the soul goes into another body and begins a new existence. If the soul were good during the first trial it will be united to a more perfect body and it will spend eternity in an indefinite series of such trials.

The only noteworthy difference between metempsychosis of ancient and modern times is the rejection of the old hypothesis that human souls enter the bodies of animals.

This theory, its exponents assert, solves most satisfactorily two very complex problems: the physical and moral inequalities which we verify in this world, and the

punishment and reward of the next life. Notwithstanding the serious pretense and the fantastic out-look of this tour of soul from star to star, metempsychosis is an hypothesis without any solid foundation. These successive re-incarnations are in direct opposition to reason; for, probation in its elementary and philosophical meaning, is a preparation for a permanent and unchangeable state; how can you seriously conceive a probation which has neither conclusion nor end and a chimerical journey towards a goal which does not exist? And, then, is it true or possible that all unfortunate human beings are guilty? By no means, for they are not conscious of crime committed in the preceeding life. Now a punishment which is not connected with the remembrance of deviation from rectitude, is cruelty and nonsense; only the guilty must be punished, but they must perceive and feel their guilt. Life for the unfortunate as for others is not a chastisement, but a trial, a little hard, perhaps, but one which will receive its reward during eternity.

Is there need to show how dangerous and immoral this theory is? If the trials which menace us, are not to have an end every sanction is gone; the creature is the absolute master of its fate; for it may indefinitely postpone its repentance in such a way that man is hopelessly delivered to corruption, and the justice of God eternally challenged and checked by the bold revolt of the impenitent sinner!

* * *

Büchner made this severe stricture on the immature science of to-day: "Our modern philosophers delight to heat over old vegetables and call them by new names, in order to serve them as the latest inventions of the philosophical kitchen." (Kraft und Stoff, p. 41). Nothing is more just; hence the revival of the old theory of the Hindoo *nirvana* by the modern pantheistic school. It proclaims the extinction of personality and its absorption into the universal soul which it calls God. Hegel and Taine, Comte and Renan agree in denying the immortality of every human soul, in

order to admit an eternal existence under the title of a pure idea. What is immortal for them is the idea of the dead individual subsisting and surviving in mankind. In a word it is the Hindoo *nirvana*, the repose of final annihilation. A pleasant idea, forsooth, to suggest to us this deep, endless sleep as a new life, this annihilation of the heart and thought as a beatitude, and the end of individuality as the immortality to which we aspire.

Even if this identity of an inert and lifeless substance were safeguarded, of what use would it be? To take away from the soul the consciousness of this identity is to ruin entirely its activity: is not the acknowledgement of this identity the first degree of knowledge?

Justice demands and reason proclaims the immortal personality of the soul, the survival of the *ego* and individual consciousness in reward or punishment. Man must find himself the same beyond the grave, without having the chain of his identity broken by the exstinction of con-

sciousness and the silence of memory. The harmony of the divine plan requires it; an immortal hereafter is necessary to our soul.

Chapter VI.

Hereafter and Punishment.

Necessary Conclusion of the Moral Order. — Sanction of the Law. — Hell and the Goodness of God. — Conditional Immortality. — The Reason of Hell.

"They that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire." This is the Catholic faith as expressed in the Creed of St. Athanasius.

The dogma of eternal punishment, however, is not the exclusive property of the Church; it is at the bottom of every religion and it has been and is believed by the whole world. Plato and Virgil, Voltaire and Rousseau, as the Gospel itself, treat this subject.

If this dogma were as absurd, as our modern rationalists contend it is, how could it have so easily obtained such universal credence? Have we not here an

evident proof of its perfect conformity with the noblest instincts of human nature and the exigencies of reason? When, therefore, Jules Simon writes that "no principle of reason leads to eternity of punishment or allows us to admit such a doctrine"; when Figuier boldly asserts that "hell is a dogma which has had its day and is no longer worthy of refutation," we suspect that they gave very superficial study to the question.

In the eyes of right reason, hell is not an absurdity; nor is it an unintelligible problem or an accessory and isolated truth. It is substantially connected with Catholic dogma and is the terrible and inevitable consequence of the most elementary and certain principles.

Can any sane mind doubt, for instance, that being and non-being, good and bad, true and false are things essentially distinct and contradictory? The one asserts what the other denies; their opposition, consequently, is absolute and radical, and it is impossible that they should have the same conclusion and bear the same fruit.

At any period of time, remote as the mind can make it, the true cannot become false, nor can the good become bad. Of course if they were ever to meet or commingle there would no longer be an irreducible opposition between them, but only a difference of tint.

Eternal hell is precisely the necessary corollary and the final term of this distinction between good and evil, which prolongs itself indefinitely. This principle which is the key-stone of the moral order, appears in striking evidence and unbending vigor only when we approach it in connection with the stupendous dogma of punishment.

Far from being "a crime," or a "horrible fable" hell, indeed, is the necessary conclusion of the moral order, and anyone who wishes to analyze thoroughly the contents of the first principles of thought will perceive that it is the last word of reason speaking of God and man and the relation existing between them.

Let us listen to St. Thomas Aquinas on this subject: "It is a principle commonly

admitted that the grievousness of wrong-doing is estimated according to the dignity of the person offended and the condition of the offender. Sin, consequently, acquires immeasurable grievousness from the infinite perfection which it insults, although it comes from a being limited in its nature and faculties.

By giving his heart to a perishable thing, man takes away from God His essential prerogative of being the Sovereign Lord, the last end and supreme beatitude of every human being. He changes his true destiny and commits a crime of treason against his Maker, which in strict justice calls for infinite punishment. As a matter of fact, sin, according to Catholic teaching, has been and could be expiated only by the infinite satisfaction of the God-Man. But the sinner who persists in final impenitence cuts himself off from this source of pardon. He himself, therefore, must suffer the penalty. But as he is a creature, he is unable to endure punishment infinite in intensity, so he must endure it infinite at least in duration.

There is another side to this philosophy of eternal guilt: the violation of the moral order, which religion calls sin, is not only infinite in malice, it is also, at least virtually, infinite in duration. When, indeed, man demands from a finite being a fictitious happiness, he violently separates himself from the Supreme Good. If God does not grant him a delay, (and under what title is He so obliged?) this state of divorce is prolonged in the sinner and must have the same duration as the soul has, that is to say, an eternal duration. For if death strikes him in guilt, it takes him as he is and leaves him unchanged: eternity which he reaches, is not a second trial, but a state which remains immutable and ever the same." (Contra Gentes, 1, IV, c. 95.)

Again, is it not the intimate desire of the sinner who abandons himself to passion, to cling to it now and always? To his idol he vows an eternal worship, asks of it his felicity forever and thus gives to his choice an unlimited and endless com-

pass. "The impenitent sinner," says Bossuet, "is not simply in the act or habit of sin; he is in the state of sin which has become humanized in him. He is man made sin."

Undoubtedly shadows still remain about this truth, but shadows are not contradictions. What is there astonishing in this, since the Infinite is the basis of all Christian dogmas? "What we know of the acts of God," says Leibnitz, "is almost nothing and yet we wish to measure His wisdom and goodness by our little knowledge. What rashness! To say with St. Paul: '*O altitudo sapientiae!*' is not to renounce our reason."

We are asked how a momentary weakness can deserve infinite punishment, and it is asserted that the dogma of Hell, if it is not a flagrant violation of divine justice, manifests at least a cruelty that cannot be reconciled with the goodness of God.

We have already said that if the punishment is rigorously infinite, it is, nevertheless, just, since there is an exact propor-

tion between the sin and its punishment. But properly speaking, the punishment is not infinite even in duration, since it has had a beginning and each day it stretches further on. Hence the victims of Hell will never spend infinite time in their prison of fire, though the duration of their punishment exceed all human calculation. The infinite, moreover, transcends all measure and admits no degree, while the pains of Hell are as diverse as the sins of which they are the chastisement. The Council of Florence decreed: "*Poenis tamen disparibus puniendos.*" [1]

But why place in opposition the duration of a sin and that of the chastisement and say that "there is no temporal fault which deserves eternal punishment." Must the rigor of the penalty be measured, not according to the enormity of the crime, but according to its duration? If that were so, a crime of a moment, like the firing of a revolver, would deserve instantaneous punishment. And yet when a man makes

[1] In decreto Unionis.

himself unworthy of pardon by the commission of a serious crime, he is sentenced to death, or to life-imprisonment, which means, as far as this world is concerned, perpetual punishment.[1] Are not the effects of this chastisement irrevocable in such a way that they would always continue, if the guilty person were always to live? Why, then, refuse to divine justice a right which we allow to human justice? (St. Thomas contra Gentes. III, 144.

[1] If this (moral) code meets with the public approval as a vindication of social order, how shall we declare it unjust in the Supreme Judge to cast out once for all, from the City of God and the society of the Saints impious men who have sinned against the majesty of the divine law? It is usually malefactors that have defied the law and that are punished for its violation, who condemn our criminal code as too severe; and it is only such as choose to be rebels against God that insist upon calling Him a tyrant. Mathematical truths are never controverted, because they do not oppose our passions; but moral and religious truths are denied, because they often conflict with our natural inclinations."

(Cardinal Gibbons.)

But the opponents of eternal punishment make the most desperate appeals to divine mercy. Vain endeavors! As if the goodness of God were the adversary of divine justice! As Cardinal Gibbons says: "God is, indeed, infinitely merciful, but His mercy cannot absorb His other attributes; it cannot run counter to His justice, His sanctity and that moral order He has established in the world. The higher appreciation one has for benevolence, truth, chastity and moral rectitude, the greater is his antipathy to the opposite vices. Now God whose love for virtue knows no bounds, must by the very nature of His Being, have an immeasurable aversion for all iniquity and, therefore, He can never be reconciled to the sinner, as long as he voluntarily clings to his sin. God exults not in the sufferings of His creatures, but in the manifestation of His eternal attributes."

To desire in God greater mercy than justice would be to wish to deteriorate His clemency in weakness and to break the

unity of the divine attributes which is reflected in all His works. The Redemption itself, as we know, is not only the most striking manifestation[1] of divine mercy, it is also synchronously an act of supreme justice.

The goodness of God is essentially the friend of good order; far from hindering the action of justice, it supposes it in order to oblige every creature, says St. Thomas, to respect good order which is the good of the universe.

Besides what reproach can we bring against divine mercy?[2] God does not

[1] "He hath appeared for the destruction of sin, by the sacrifice of Himself" Heb. IX, 26; "He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and might cleanse to himself a people acceptable" Tit. II, 14.

[2] Hear Holy Writ: "Say not: The mercy of the Lord is great, he will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come from him and his wrath looketh upon sinners." Eccl, V, 6. 7. "Mercy and wrath are with him. He is mighty to forgive and to pour out indignation: according to his mercy is, so his correction judgeth a man according to his works." Eccli. XVI, 13.

neglect any means to lead man to his end, and to each and everyone He can say in the words of Holy Scripture: "What more should I have done to thee, and have not done?"

At this reproach do we not hear the "anger of love rumblimg," as Joseph de Maistre observes? Despised by impenitent man, God withdraws, says Lacordaire, for, "love repulsed no longer pardons: hell is the realization of the law of love." [1]

* * *

The philosophical systems which reject the eternity of punishment may be reduced to two, [2] one of which professes optional

[1] We may say that it is because God is infinitely good, wise and just that He has allowed the pit of hell to be dug in order thereby to excite men to good and to bury therein such as up to the very last hour of live have despised His love: "Eternal justice and primal love made me," says Dante speaking in the name of hell.

[2] I mention as a memorandum only, the system of Lucretius (De Natura rerum, III, 976) where the poet, to do away with the fear of Hell, gives a symbolical meaning to its torments. According

or conditional immortality, the other future reconciliation of the wicked with God. The former system is very old: Cicero adopted it, some Christian writers, like Arnobius, accepted it and it is now, as the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge (N. Y. 1891, p. 1972) says, meeting great favor within the orthodox communions of Protestantism. Richard Whately, Locke, Hudson, Watts and Isaac Taylor are its best-known English defenders.

This system declares that the good will live eternally and enjoy heaven as a reward for their virtues: but the wicked will be annihilated in punishment of their sin; thus immortality is for every human being optional or conditional. St. Thomas with his deep acumen has refuted this doctrine. God, he says, could assuredly annihilate the guilty, but it is more just that He preserve and punish them. First,

to him those torments are only the allegory which find punishment within themselves. Hinc Acherusia fit stultorum denique vita.

because it is the will of man which revolts against God, while his nature remains in the order which is divinely secured. Punishment, therefore, ought to strike the will. Now, if the guilty were annihilated, punishment would fall on nature only and the will would go free. There are, besides, two elements in sin: the guilty repel the Absolute Good and embrace what is perishable, and these two elements must be found in the retribution. Now annihilation would deprive the sinner of the Absolute Good and would not punish the abuse he has made of creatures: a fact that would be contrary to justice. Then again the pains must be diverse and proportionate to the sins, if strict justice is to be realized; but there would be no degrees in annihilation; such a penalty, therefore would be a violation of justice! And what would become of the moral order if annihilation were its only sanction? When the fear of eternal punishment is hardly strong enough to restrain the impetuosity of human passions, of what value would the vague prospect of annihilation be?

The evanescence of the guilty, moreover, is in no way the reparation of the injustice they committed, nor can it become the safeguard of the moral order. In a word if God were forced to annihilate the guilty, He would acknowledge Himself vanquished and after having created the soul immortal, He would be obliged to abrogate His plan, because it was the pleasure of a creature, sure of escaping eternal damnation, to laugh Him to scorn, and, while going into nothingness, to blaspheme against Him.

Our opponents object in the name of justice: "Life," they say, "is a gift of God; we did not ask for it, nor did we accept it: why may we not resign it?" Because life is not only a gift and benefit, it is also a trial, and God has the strictest right to impose it upon us without consultation. How, indeed, could we have been consulted when we had no being? Rational as this doctrine is, it seems inadmissible to some adversaries of eternal retribution, so they have revived the theory of restorationism

held by Origen and his disciples, according to which the punishment ot the impenitent is limited and eventually all will be saved.[1]

Universalists[2] profess such a belief. Unitarians[3] teach almost the same thing.

[1] Some theologians who claim the existence of a temporary hell, deny the existence of purgatory. What then? As Perrone remarks (Praelectiones Theologicae II, 727) "coeperunt negare inferni aeternitatem, ut in ejus locum sufficiat infernum temporarium, seu quod idem est purgatorium; et jam pugnant contra nos pro solo purgatorio. Once and always *mentita est iniquitas sibi.*

[2] We believe that there is one God, whose nature is love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ by one Holy Spirit of grace who will *finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.* Profession of Faith, 1803, art. II, by H. Lyon, a study of the sects, p. 160.

[3] "Unitarians oppose the common doctrine of everlasting punishment as being hostile to the sovereignty, wisdom, justice and mercy of the divine Being and also of limiting the redeeming power of Christ and his gospel. They believe that the object of punishment being reformatory, it will only continue until the sinner shall be reformed." Clarke, Man. of Unit, p. 62.

Many Congregationalists [1] and some Episcopalians [2] doubt eternal punishment.

This utopia is opposed to reason as well as to faith. In order that God may acquit the impenitent guilty and that they may come to Him, repentance is necessary, for pardon granted without repentance would be impunity and injustice. Now repentance is impossible to the damned, because their probation having once ended, they no longer have either grace or free will. They have, indeed, a certain sorrow for their misdeeds, but it is a sorrow which has nothing in common with repentance, it comes from egotism. What they detest is not evil but the punishment of evil and an unavailing regret for its commission. This hypothesis of a temporary hell, likewise undermines the moral order, by taking away every solid sanction. If, indeed, good and evil terminate in exact coalescence, then between these two terms there

[1] Cf. *Progressive Orthodoxy* by the editors of the Andover Review.

[2] *Farrar*, Eternal Hope; Mercy and Judgement. Cf. *Row*, Future Retribution.

is no such essential opposition as is usually believed, and if the conclusions be the same, the principles cannot be very different. And what does a certain number of years in hell amount to, if the happiness of heaven will some day be attained? Everything which passes away and comes to an end influences the heart of mankind very little. We recall the case of a German philosopher who was willing to sacrifice two million years of his eternal felicity, for the privilege of enjoying a certain kind of pleasure: here is an anticipation of what the moral order would become, if the dreamers of sentimentalism had their way.

Let us leave those utopias and believe in what the Gospel calls the "great chasm"[1] which divine justice has fixed between heaven and hell.

"Hell," if we understand its meaning, "is sin."[2] This expression of Bossuet helps us to catch a glimpse of the rational

[1] Luke XVI, 26.

[2] "Wickedness is sin and sin is damnation." Shakespeare.

propriety of the Catholic teaching on the nature of the pains of hell. God, being supremely and infallibly just, proportions the pain to the sin, as the effect to the cause. Now sin, like every material or moral activity, has two terms; the will which commits it, repels God and substitutes for Him a perishable good. The pain, therefore, must reflect this double character, for it is, St. Augustine says, "the order of the crime." Hence the necessity of a pain called by theologians "the pain of sense," the philosophic reason of which is logically perceived: Everything, indeed, even in hell must concur to the harmony of the general order of creation. Now this order has been deranged by evil: the material creation which should help man to reach his end, has been violently disturbed from its natural destination. Good order requires that it avenge itself, as it were, against its disturber and unjust tyrant. Since it is impossible for all the elements to do this, the providential commission will be fulfilled for all by one,

namely fire, that mysterious power and universal force which acts everywhere and is concealed under the movements of matter.

In regard to the nature of this fire of Hell "which cannot be quenched," philosophers and believers may repeat the words of St. Augustine: "What will this fire be? I believe that nobody knows, unless the Divine Spirit reveal it to him." According to some writers the fire is only a metaphorical one, representing the horrible torments of hell. But the Church has explicitly reproved this opinion,[1] and reason which looks upon the fire of hell as a logical consequence and a natural sequel of sin, willingly consents to this censure.

This fire, the Gospel says, is eternal, it will never be quenched; as salt preserves meat, so it will preserve the reprobate delivered to vengeance. "As the grass of

[1] According to a decision of the Sacred Penitentiary, dated April 30, 1890, absolution should be refused a penitent who, after being instructed, persists in holding that the fire of hell is not real, but figurative.

the field, though cut by the teeth of the animals which feed on it, always revives, so will the fire be with the damned."

In fine to complete this lugubrious description let us still mention the "thick and deep darkness" (Ps. XLVIII, 20), the ardent thirst (Luke XVI, 20), the ever-flowing tears (Matt. XXII, 13), the worm of remorse and despair, which never dies (Mark IX, 43).

But these are only the least pains of hell: the greatest, says Catholic theology, is *the pain of loss*.

We have seen that the mind and heart of man are naturally inclined towards the Infinite. For a time they can be seduced by the mirage of a perishable good. But when probation is over, human nature is adjusted to seek, to crave for God alone. Disappointment and defeat are met at every turn. At the very moment when the lost soul should reach the term of its complete evolution, God repels it. Suspended between the supreme good which escapes it, and the finite beings which death takes

from it, it is agitated into an eternal abyss, as Pascal says, "quartered between two worlds." And this contradiction between the present state of man and his primal destination, this reversal and breaking down of all his nature destined for happiness but now eternally frustrated, is for him such an unspeakable torment that the genius of St. Augustine cannot translate it into human language: "To be separated from God," he says, "is a torment as great as the very greatness of God."

Before this consideration, the question proposed by some authors: "Are the secondary torments of hell some day to be mitigated?" loses its importance: for, according to the remark of St. John Chrysostom, "what will the damned care for the lesser torments since heaven is lost forever."

Can we better conclude than by the words of Leibnitz: "God who has revealed everything necessary to make us fear the greatest of calamities, has not revealed all that it necessary to make us understand it."

Chapter VII.

Hereafter and Reward.

Philosophy and the End of Man. — The Heaven of the Gospel. — The Light of Glory. — The Happiness of Heaven.

It may happen that the soul will not have completely apostatized from virtue at the end of probation, and yet it may not be pure enough to enter upon the enjoyment of the Sovereign Good. Hence the necessity of Purgatory, a rational and consoling dogma the Catholic Church proposes to our belief, which was already sketched by the Egyptians and Persians and outlined in the works of Plato and Virgil.

But Purgatory is a place of transition only. The soul after purgatorial purification attains a permanent state where it reposes in the full harmony of its perfections and in the enjoyment of the end of its being.

What is this end and what is the sense of human life?

The rational creature can find its ultimate perfection only in the principle of its being; for no perfection exists for any being whatever, except in union with its principle. But man can go to God by different routes and be united to Him in different ways.

The only beatitude that reason can promise him is one proportionate to his natural faculties, that is to say, a clearer view of God through created things, a prolongation of man's actual knowledge, which is able to satisfy the aspirations of the soul. Logically we can go no further. If there is a higher, a transcendental state of bliss in keeping with the faculties raised to the supernatural order, reason by itself cannot deny the possibility of the fact or demonstrate its necessity.

When, then, rationalists in the name of philosophy pretend to know that the end of man is "to see God eternally as He is and to love Him with the whole heart

throughout eternity," they arbitrarily enlarge the domain of reason and the exigencies of human nature, and they *confound* the *natural order* and its lawful development with the *supernatural order*.

Philosophy leads its pupil as far as the frontiers only of the natural order and there commits him to a surer guide, who, far from obliging him to abdicate his reason, demands of him, on the contrary, the most fruitful exercise of it, to enter a more luminous path for the conquest of a new world.

Paganism had a presentiment of divine intervention in the solution of the problem of our destiny. Socrates is in vague expectation of Him whom Holy Writ calls *expectatio gentium* and the words of Plato are too well known to insist upon them: "We must choose the best human teaching, go aboard it as on a raft, and thus with some danger cross the river of life, unless you can cross more surely on a stronger craft, namely, on some divine teaching."

The Master for whom the "divine Plato"

longed, has come, and the world beyond the grave upon which reason could throw only a few feeble rays of light is now gloriously radiant with the light of the Cross. That Master is Christ Jesus, the Son of God: "Never did man speak like this man." John VII, 46

Some truth runs through the humorous simile of Luther: "The human mind is like a drunken man on horseback; if you raise it on one side, it falls down the other."

Truth is generally found between the extremes, and in the question at hand it is found between the reveries of idealism and the lewdness of sensuality.

Mahomet promises to his followers a sensual paradise well-padded and quilted and provided with all possible enjoyments.

Plato went higher; for him the happiness of heaven is the fruit of the activity of the mind and the enjoyment of the Absolute Good; but as his absolute good is only an ideal distinct from God, it is difficult to imagine what the philosopher means. For Renan, beatitude consists in the "worship

of the ideal" since his god is "the category of the ideal."

The Catholic definition of the beatitude of heaven has been given by the Council of Florence: *intueri clare ipsum Deum trinum et unum ut est.*

What can be more simple and sublime? Our faculties are invincibly attracted towards a mysterious and perfect term. This ideal which they follow, recedes even to the infinite which alone can satisfy them. And as the infinite is only God, beatitude consists in possessing Him as He is.

In this world we have only remote manifestations of God, *divinitatis fulgurationes* as Leibnitz says; He is concealed behind a cloud from which He speaks in the enigmatic language of faith, *per speculum in enigmate.* In heaven, on the contrary, without the need of space and without a veil, face to face, *facie ad faciem;* we shall penetrate the abyss of His being, the mysteries of His intimate life and the fruitful harmony of His indissoluble unity in the adorable Trinity of persons.

Here below truth comes subdivided by our narrow conceptions and the highest genius is hardly able to explore a corner of the universe and say a few words on its mysteries. There we shall contemplate Truth which is the source of all truth and contains the eternal reason of things; we shall embrace in a mighty synthesis the ensemble of beings, from the infinitesimal atom to the worlds which shine throughout sidereal space — matter with all its forces and laws, the mind with its great manifestations, the designs and plans of Providence over men and nations — the finite and infinite in their indefinable relation and intercourse.

Here below the human heart has only rare, incomplete and transient enjoyment; to love is often to suffer. There all good gathered and personified in the Absolute will communicate itself to the soul and as a torrent, *sicut torrens ab austro*, will pour into it; the abyss of the human heart will be filled to the top; "I shall be satisfied when the glory shall appear," Ps. XVI,

15, "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleasure" Ps. XXXV, 9.

If now created things have for us so much seduction, what will the Creator be? If the echoes are so harmonious, what will the voice be? If the reflection is so beautiful, what will the center of light be? If we fall on our knees before this transient apparition of the infinite called the Sublime, what will be our ecstasy before His radiant manifestation in the first rays of the eternal day?

One day St. Augustine by a supreme effort of his genius and a sudden leap of his heart felt, as it were, the Infinite and he received that "wound of love and truth" which never closed.

What, then, will be the eternal ecstasies of the mind and heart in the "city" where God is the light contemplated without shadow and the love embracing in an eternal transport those predestined beings to whom He gives Himself and from whose

eyes He wipes away all tears! (Apoc. XXI, 4.)

At the prospect of this indefinible glory, human speech should hold its lips and confess that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him" I Cor. II, 9.

But here a difficulty presents itself. God "inhabiteth light inaccessible" says St. Paul (I. Tim. VI, 16). Between the infinite and our faculties, great as you may suppose their natural development to be, there is an incommensurable disproportion. How will it be filled? St. Thomas gives a luminous answer to that question: "No being," he says, "is raised to a condition which excels its nature, unless it be prepared by a special disposition for this condition." As the infinite is beyond the grasp of the finite, the human intellect must be raised to a superhuman state, to embrace the infinite. This is the effect of a superior quality which is a participation

of the very light of God and which theologians call "the light of glory." It is, as it were, the sense of the divine; it may be compared to an instrument which widens the field and enlarges the scope of the eye, or to a divine engraftment upon the wild stock of human nature, in order to make it produce acts superior to its natural condition.

In seeing God, says St. John, we shall become deiform. "When he shall appear, we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is." (I. John III, 2.)

Here is a mystery, but not an absurdity. "If God," says Monsabré, "has made a law of natural optics which proportions the small point of our eye called the retina, to vast spaces, I do not see what can prevent Him from making a law of supernatural optics which proportions our intellect to embrace the infinite."

It must be said, however, that this immediate seeing of God is not comprehensive, i. e. it does not exhaust the infinite. To comprehend, indeed, is to equal; only

the infinite can compenetrate the depth of the infinite. Just as human language is not able to define God, because He transcends the frame of our definitions, so the human intellect is not able to embrace Him entirely because He is greater than our thoughts.

It is clear that the enjoyment of the Infinite by the human soul in no way resembles immobility or a slumber approaching annihilation. This fantastic conception of the future life supposes that joy is the consequence of inertia and that activity necessarily produces fatigue and pain; nothing is more erroneous; even in this life pleasure is the consequence of a well-regulated activity and many philosophers teach with Pascal that true happiness is found in the exercise of thought, whence the soul receives ineffable consolations. Aristotle had already understood that God's enjoyment comes from acting, our supreme pleasure from thinking. Activity, in fact, is essential to life and beatitude. Far from being an arrest of life, activity is its apogee.

Now if a series of vital operations is necessary to enjoy the true and the good as they appear imperfect in this world, shall we not need to display a wonderful activity to contemplate the true in its source and fulness?

The true God is not, indeed, an empty formula, an abstract conception, a mental product without being or reason; He is an active, personal, living Being, or rather He is Pure Act by excellence, the very Life which without pain or effort spontaneously communicates itself to the enraptured intellect.

The ancients could not fancy a happiness at once perfect and eternal and they conceived the future life as another edition with the common accidents and pastimes of the present one. Thus Plato considers that each soul, accustomed to live among changes, will finish by becoming fatigued with the contemplation of truth and sooner or later will commence a new existence in this world. He could not dispossess himself of the idea that the conditions of the

present life and the future will be absolutely different.

Progress, of course, is the law of every being which has not yet reached the aim of its existence. But the inhabitants of heaven have reached their term, i. e. they have attained final perfection; they cannot, then, be subject any longer to the same laws as we, unless man would be condemned to run always after an end which does not exist and his aim would be to have no aim.

Will variety, then, be lacking? No, for God, in whom the Trinity of persons does not alter the unity of His nature, is at the same time the principle of the unity of beings and of the variety which shines forth in all creation. It is this "Beauty ever ancient ever new" which "never ceases to teach the elect who will always be eager to learn and to draw from their measureless treasure." And so, St. Paul says, they go from glory to glory, *a claritate in claritatem*. Hence their joy which no man can take from them and which is

expressed in the spontaneous cry of the heart: forever and forever! "Eternity," says Bossuet, "is in the essence of love." How, indeed, even reason can ask, could the elect enjoy their felicity, if they felt, hanging over their head, a threat or danger of a final catastrophe in which they would founder forever?

* * *

A question has been raised which has peculiar interest for the human heart: "Will the blessed recognize one another in heaven?" Yes, reason and faith answer together. In heaven as on earth man is essentially a social being; since in the future life he keeps his perfect identity and the consciousness of this identity, he holds, also, his legitimate affections of family and friendship. The river of Oblivion (Λεθη) at which the poets of old made their dead drink, upon entering the kingdom of shadows is a pagan dream. Heaven is, according to Holy Writ, a kingdom and a city, therefore a society; now is there a society if the members do not know one another?

Besides, St. Augustine asks, will the elect be less loving because they have become better? No, grace crowns nature without injuring it: we can keep the hope living in our hearts of meeting our friends in eternity, after parting from them in time. If those who have titles to that love, make themselves unworthy of it, the happiness of the elect will not be disturbed by that fact. In heaven, says St. Thomas, God is the measure of the affections, and if in this world the beauty of a creature can deaden the deepest love, will not all regrets disappear in the unspeakable enjoyment of the possession of the Infinite. Faith, anticipating our desires, adds that the body, for the perfection of this joy, will be endowed with higher qualities in keeping with its new condition, and will participate in the felicity of the soul, after having been associated in its trials.

This dogma of the resurrection of the body is no more opposed to reason than any other Christian dogma. Says St. Thomas: "In the midst of the vivifying

whirlwind which incessantly carries away the atoms of our body, the soul remains and unifies the body and gives to it human form: why later on will the soul not be able to exercise again its formative influence?" So, the elect will find themselves whole and in perfect identity on the threshold of eternity; their soul will always exercise its sublime functions and their body will shine with an incorruptible beauty.

Faith and reason seem also to agree that the blessed will not spend eternity in a state of immobility.

Earth, an imperceptible atom in creation, was for them the place of trial, but sidereal space holding an infinity of other worlds like our sun, will be the place of their eternal triumph; *Sicut scintilla in arundineto discurrent*. There will be unfolded the majestic economy of the divine plan, in which all creation converges to man. This is that incomparable destiny on which Bossuet displays his magnificent style: "Eternal felicity," he says, "is a glory

more solid than that admired by men, a grandeur more sure than that depending on wealth, an immortality more certain than that promised by history, a hope better supported than that offered by this world."

CONCLUSION.

A contemporary author writes: "Civilization, society and ethics are as a pair of beads whose chain is the immortality of the soul; take away the chain and everything falls."

And the chain having been removed, the beads go astray. Can anything durable, indeed, be founded on an indefinite "perhaps" or "who knows"? Thus the three Kantian questions are asked today more than ever: "Who am I? What must I do? For what may I hope?" And in the midst of the philosophical disorder and through the debris of the systems which darken the horizon of the twentieth century, the Christian ideal shines as the rising of the day after the darkness of the night. Sincere souls turn toward the religious idea, toward that intellectual light full of love, of which Dante sings:

> "Luce intellettual piena d'amore
> Amor di vero ben pien di letizia."

They go back to the two fundamental truths which even the French revolution-

ists acclaimed through Robespierre: the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.

But men of learning do not content themselves with looking at the Catholic religion from the outside; timidly they open the door, not yet to enter, but to admire the powerful architecture of our Catholic dogmas.

Unanimous in seeing in these truly Christian ideas the source of the purest, of the beautiful, may they go so far as to recognize our religion as the principle of good and the necessary basis of private and public morality. May this movement to the faith of their ancestors grow stronger, wider and more fruitful and may it bring back those wandering minds to a sane philosophy and the true religion. There they will be taught how to travel through life with the light of the Christian ideal and to enter eternity with the cross of Christ in their hand and His love in their heart.

THE END.